

In the Abstract

Please substitute the following amended Abstract for the Abstract as currently pending (deleted matter is shown by strikethrough and added matter is shown by underlining):

~~The present invention relates to a reclining mechanism having a construction in which a plurality of pawls are received in a pair of housings that are relatively rotatably connected to each other, each of these pawls being prevented from rotating relative to one of said housings and being engageable with a ratchet formed in the other of said housings, each of said pawls being moved by a spring force from a free position in which the relative rotation of said housings is permitted to a locking position in which the relative rotation of said housings is prevented by virtue of engagement of the pawl and said ratchet, wherein at least one of the pawls is moved prior to the other of the pawls when each of said pawls moves from said free position to said locking position.~~

~~According to utilization of such a construction, when each of the slide pawls moves by the spring force from the free position to the locking position, in its initial state, the spring force can converge on one of the slide pawls, for example, the slide pawl having a preceding movement start timing. Therefore, the engagement (locking) force between one of the slide pawls and the ratchet can be increased without increasing the spring force. As a result, so-called "tooth slippage" may be eliminated so that the locking performance of the reclining mechanism can be increased.~~

A reclining mechanism may have a construction in which a plurality of pawls are received in a pair of housings that are relatively rotatably connected to each other, each of these

pawls being prevented from rotating relative to one of the housings and being engageable with a ratchet formed in the other of the housings, each of the pawls being moved by a spring force from a free position in which the relative rotation of the housings is permitted to a locking position in which the relative rotation of the housings is prevented by virtue of engagement of each of the pawls and the ratchet, wherein at least one of the pawls is moved prior to the other of the pawls when each of the pawls moves from the free position to the locking position.